

Foley Newsletter

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Ralph G. Hellmich

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Hello, all. It's already our spring season here in Foley. I hope everyone is enjoying the weather. The winter guests and spring break season have come and gone. Both are an important part of our economy.

Our Foley schools continue to achieve honors and awards. Two of our teachers received the Baldwin County Teacher of the Year at last month's event.

Ursula Thompson, from Foley High School, is the Baldwin County Board of Education Secondary Teacher of the Year. Amy Barker, from Foley Elementary School, is BCBOE Elementary Teacher of the Year. Congratulations to them both. This shows the quality of the teachers in our Foley system. All of our teachers, administrators and support staff work hard to create a tremendous environment for our students to achieve success.

I attended a recent Reach and Teach event at Foley High School. The statewide program was the foundation for a collaborative effort between FHS, The Velcro Pygmies and OWA. The event included a concert that featured both the FHS Noise Band and The Velcro Pygmies. The students handled all aspects of the performance as a learning event—from playing music to handling sound and lighting to creating stage props. Kudos to them.

I am pleased to report that the John B. Foley Park Fountain Project is complete and last month brought the opening of the new section of North Pecan Street. We will finish the final phase of the Wilbourne Antique Rose Trail shortly. Progress continues on the Juniper Street extension and we have started the connection that will open South Pecan from Highway 98 south beyond County Road 10.



Mayor's Notes

The Pickleball Project design is completed and will start soon. An associated connectivity road beside it will be constructed by the Foley Public Works Department. Across the city sidewalk, road crossing signals, intersection improvements and repaving, just to list a few, will keep moving forward.

The council approved the new restroom facilities for Beulah Heights Park. The Kids Park renovation is underway. It should be complete before the end of the school year.

I would like to thank the Community Department, Chuck Lay in particular, for efforts to help citizens receive a lower flood insurance premium. Foley joined the FEMA CRS (Community Rating System) in 2017 to reduce citizens' costs for flood insurance.

Because of their efforts our grade went up on the FEMA scale, which equates to a 15% savings on flood insurance effective Oct. 1, 2023. Along those lines, please remember Foley ranks third in the entire country in the number of fortified houses. This qualifies owners for federal tax credits.

New retail businesses move forward. OWA just opened the outside portion of Tropic Falls Water Park, an incredible facility both indoor and outdoor. To see what else is under construction, check our website at cityoffoley.org/newinfoley.

Well, let me close. Please enjoy this spring—soon to be summer—season.

Mayor Ralph G. Hellmich

Foley flood rating improves

Improved flood ratings mean that Foley homeowners will be paying less for flood insurance.

The National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System announced that Foley's rating increased one level. Mayor Ralph Hellmich said the change will cut insurance payments for many property owners.

"It reflects that we have done well at managing our floodplain resources," Hellmich said. "We're getting a bump to a better rating with ISO and it's gonna translate to everyone who has flood insurance in Foley to a 5% to 15% savings off of your premiums. That's a direct benefit for citizens right now."

The mayor said city officials have been working to set policies to reduce the danger of damage from flooding. Those actions helped improve the ratings.

A statement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency said the city's rating has improved to Class 7, up from Class 8. Foley's floodplain management activities will allow property owners to qualify for a discount of up to 16% on flood insurance premiums for most NFIP policies issued or renewed on or after Oct. 1, 2023.

"This savings is a tangible result of the flood mitigation activities your community implements to protect lives and reduce property damage," the statement said. ■

Foley finance dept. wins awards

The City of Foley won a rare "triple crown" of major financial reporting awards for the third consecutive year.

The Government Finance Officers Association presented its Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, known as the PAFR Award, to Foley. The award recognized Foley's Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2021.

Foley's PAFR breaks down complicated financial reports to help residents understand where city revenue comes from and how the money is spent.

The city has already received the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for several years.

Foley is one of the few agencies in Alabama to receive all three awards from the GFOA.

Foley's PAFR can be viewed at cityoffoley.org/finance/2022pafr. ■



Improvements planned at historic Foley Bakery building

Work is scheduled to start soon on improvements to one of Foley's oldest buildings. Closed for more than 15 years, the plan is to rehabilitate the historic Foley Bakery structure and reopen it later this year.

The Foley City Council voted March 20 to approve a facade grant for \$19,500 to pay some of the costs of replacing windows and doors and making other improvements to the building. The replacement of the windows and doors is estimated to cost \$200,998.

Mark Wright of 4Wright Investments, one of the owners of the building, said work should start in the next few weeks.

The total cost of the planned renovations of the building is \$443,296. The work is scheduled to start April 20 and be completed by Oct. 20, according to the grant application.

The building was constructed in 1925 and operated as the Foley Bakery



for many years. The most recent use of the building was the restaurant Cactus Cafe, which closed in 2007. After the restaurant closed, city officials said the building was too deteriorated to allow another business to reopen without renovations.

The city bought the building in 2012 to preserve the structure, which is one of the oldest in Foley and a contributing structure to the Foley National Register Historic District. The city later sold the building to Katapult Properties and 4Wright Investments.

Foley Mayor Ralph Hellmich said the building has been an interest for residents for many years.

"This is probably just about the most asked about piece of property," Hellmich said. "I think this is going to be great."

The building is located at the northeast corner of North Alston Street and West Laurel Avenue (U.S. 98). ■

Foley K9 Unit ties record for regional awards

The Foley Police Department's K9 Unit recently received regional recognition, winning several awards as well as earning certification at the Southeast Regionals.

The unit took part in the Southeast Regionals along with departments from Georgia, Florida and other Alabama agencies. Not only did all three Foley entrants successfully certify with their dogs, but the unit also won multiple awards.

Sergeant Carlos Lizarraga and K9 Tua tied a record more than 40 years old by placing first in five categories. The duo now shares this impressive distinction, set in 1982, with Ron Bowling of Lakeland, Florida. Sergeant Lizarraga and K9 Tua also placed first overall for the entire competition.

Corporal Curtis Ricks and K9



Niko, along with Sgt. Lizarraga and K9 Tua, competed as a two-man team and placed first overall.

Other Foley recognition included Officer Erik Morris and K9 Bo placing 19th overall and Cpl. Ricks and K9 Niko taking 20th overall. ■

Foley Public Library celebrating centennial



The Foley Public Library will commemorate its first 100 years on Wed., May 3, with a centennial celebration.

The celebration includes cake, punch and hors d'oeuvres and will feature photos from the first 100 years and interviews with the mayor and other Foley citizens.

Staff from the library's Local Alabama History Department will be on hand to answer questions and discuss particulars concerning the institution's history.

The centennial celebration is open to all interested Foley citizens. The library seeks to reach out to its community to share this monumental moment in time. Join the library from 10 a.m. to noon on May 3 and share your memories of the library. ■

Road improvements underway in Foley

Several new road projects will give Foley drivers more north-south options through the city.

Work is underway to extend Juniper Street south and west to link with Alabama 59, while a project to extend South Pecan Street also began recently. Another route, extending North Pecan Street from East Peachtree Avenue to Fern Street has been completed and is open to traffic.

The extension of Juniper Street from its current southern end at Mifflin Road (Baldwin County 20) to Alabama 59 should be complete by summer. That project will cost about \$4.53 million.

Mayor Ralph Hellmich said Foley is working to improve access around the city in areas such as the site of the North Pecan Street extension.

He said the project to improve access in a growing area of Foley is one of the goals of the city's 10-year road plan.

Much of the work on North Pecan Street was done by city crews, with the asphalt work being put out to bid.

The South Pecan Street extension is part of a project that will also add routes for golf carts, bicycles and pedestrians. The project will extend the route and improve access from U.S. 98 south to beyond Baldwin County 12. ■

New Equipment

The Foley Fire Department recently acquired some new response equipment. A Ford F-150 Powerboost hybrid pickup has been outfitted and placed into service as the new command vehicle. This truck will be used by captains to respond to emergency incidents and will assist them in carrying out their many daily duties. We also acquired a new Polaris Ranger 1000 UTV to support operations at many of the special outdoor events like the Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival and the sporting events at Graham Creek Nature Preserve. We are appreciative of our City Council recognizing and supporting our equipment needs.

Outdoor Burn Ban

The Foley Fire Department reminds you that the annual Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Burn Ban for Baldwin County goes into effect May 1 in an effort to improve air quality. Open burning of debris is prohibited until Nov. 1 with only a few exceptions (recreational, ceremonial, cooking fires and agricultural, silvicultural burns). These exceptions may also be restricted by the fire chief via a local burn ban when drought or weather conditions make it necessary.

Home Safety

As we enter the summer months, we remind you to prepare for hurricane season and other severe weather events. Please download a reliable weather app for your mobile devices or purchase a weather radio with local alerts. Contact our office at 251-943-1266 for more information on these items, and Turn Your Attention to Fire Prevention! ■

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FY 2022/23 Annual Report (Oct. 2022–March 2022)

- **188 Single-family Permits**
\$38,070,144 Valuation
- **28 Duplex/Multi-family Permits**
\$36,242,224 Valuation
- **14 New Commercial Permits**
\$9,675,002 Valuation
(Includes Circle K, Texas Roadhouse, Dairy Queen, Freddy's & Raceway)
- **Commercial Addition/Remodel Permits**
\$88,469,782 Valuation
- **1,687 Total Permits**
\$183,393,044 Valuation
- **3rd in the nation in FORTIFIED construction**

Visit cityoffoley.org/Community-Development or call 251-952-4011 for more information. ■



407 E. Laurel Ave.
P.O. Box 1750
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Upcoming Events

Foley Events Updated Daily VisitFoley.com
Foley Public Library FoleyLibrary.org
Foley Senior Center CityofFoley.org
Foley Sports Tourism FoleySportsTourism.com
Graham Creek Preserve GrahamCreekPreserve.org

Foley Public Library

New hours: 9 a.m.–7 p.m. Mon.–Thurs.;
9 a.m.–5 p.m. Fri.–Sat. Monthly programs,
Makersaurus Time, adult arts and crafts, family
bingo night, lunch and learns and other clubs.

Downtown OWA

Live shows: Brandon Styles, magician/
comedian and other special events.
For info and times: VisitOWA.com.

Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market

Local produce, fresh seafood, homemade
goods and more. Open Sat. 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
20733 Miflin Rd.
CoastalAlabamaMarket.com

Foley Senior Center

Adults over 50 meet at the Foley Senior
Center every 1st and 3rd Saturday evening
with live entertainment for dancing. Doors
open at 6:00, band begins at 6:30. \$7 per
person. Bring refreshments of your choice.

May 3 Library Centennial Celebration

10 a.m.–noon. Hors d'oeuvres and viewing
of interviews & photos about the past 100
years as well as our future.
foleylibrary.org

May 4-6 Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival

A family-friendly event with tethered
balloon rides, balloon glows, balloons in
flight, artisan and food vendors and live

music! Downtown OWA.
www.gulfcoastballoonfestival.com

May 5, June 2 & July 7 Guided Golf Cart Tours at Graham Creek Nature Preserve

Reservations required. Please call 251-923-
4267. GrahamCreekPreserve.org

May 5 & 12 Education in Motion

9 a.m.–4 p.m. Registration required. Any
school-aged student is welcome. Learn the
science behind the rides at The Park
at OWA. VisitOWA.com

May 13–14 52nd Annual Art in the Park

Over 100 artists showcase hand-crafted art
and gift items. John B. Foley Park.

May 19 & 26, June 2 & 9 Heritage Park Marketplace

Fridays 4–7 p.m. Offers a variety of arts and
crafts, handmade items, plants and much
more. Heritage Park.
www.VisitFoley.com

May 19 & 26, June 2 & 9 Music and a Movie

Fridays. Music at 6 p.m., movie at dusk.
Bring a blanket or lawn chairs and enjoy live
entertainment and a movie under the stars.
Free to the public. Concessions are available
for purchase. Heritage Park.
www.VisitFoley.com

May 20, June 17 & July 15 Trail Trot at the Preserve

9 a.m. Walk Graham Creek Nature Preserve
with our staff. GrahamCreekPreserve.org

May 27 Memorial Day Fireworks at OWA

8:50 p.m. Downtown OWA.
VisitOWA.com

June 16 & July 21 Art Walk at OWA

Downtown OWA.
VisitOWA.com

June 17 4th Annual Corn Festival

Open Sat. 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
20733 Miflin Rd.
CoastalAlabamaMarket.com

July 1 4th of July Celebration and Fireworks

Celebrate Independence Day with family-
friendly activities and live entertainment
in Downtown OWA, followed by an epic
fireworks show at 8:50 p.m.
VisitOWA.com

July 22 Caribbean Day at OWA

Downtown OWA.
VisitOWA.com

July 29 Harry Potter Birthday Celebration

9–11 a.m. Magical treats, games and prizes.
FoleyLibrary.org

July 29 End of Summer Water Day

10 a.m. Come play in the water.
GrahamCreekPreserve.org

Aug. 3–5 Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation Annual Rodeo

Foley Horse Arena
113 East Rosetta Avenue
www.jennifermoorefoundation.com